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Oppose Deportations to Rwanda

In an interview on Sky News on 15 June 2022, David Lammy, the shadow Foreign Secretary stated that the plan to send asylum seekers who had arrived in the United Kingdom to Rwanda, so that they would apply for refugee status there, was “a distraction” and that the Government “knew”...that “it was unlikely to get this through the courts”.

This narrative is shared by many in the commentariat and puts the freedoms and potentially the lives of many asylum seekers at risk.

It is a narrative that is ill-informed, as it fails to analyse the legal position into which the Government and Brexit have now placed the U.K. It is that of an outlier, who no longer accepts that international law applies to it and who has restricted rights to seek asylum in national law, in order to support the false claim that refugees and migrants are to blame for the economic and social chaos that is of its own making.

International criteria

To say that the flight to Rwanda was merely a diversion and was never going to take off is to ignore the contents of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. Individuals who meet the international criteria for recognition as refugees fleeing from states, such as Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, but who arrive without a visa, can now have their applications classified as “inadmissible”.

The evidence to support their claim is never considered and they can be immediately detained to await deportation. The Kafkaesque twist to this situation is that there is no visa that is available for an individual seeking asylum. At most, the UK has granted permission to enter as part of very

limited settlement schemes to those it had directly employed in Afghanistan or to very vulnerable women and children marooned in refugee camps close to Syria.

Refugee Convention

This is despite the fact that the Refugee Convention obliges states, such as the UK, who are parties to the Convention, to consider an application for asylum from a national who has arrived in its territory. Whilst the UK remained a part of the European Union, it could rely on the Dublin Regulation establishing the criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third country national to return an asylum seeker to another Member State, if that State had already granted a visa to or received an asylum application from such a national and if they were not a child. Those days are gone and any suggestion that separate arrangements could be agreed with states, such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands from which asylum seekers are setting out for the UK, ignores the fact that it is the EU, in its totality, that has to agree changes in EU migration law. In addition, the EU's confidence in any international agreement with the UK has been further undermined by the UK's decision to unilaterally renege on the Northern Ireland Protocol and that, in consequence, it is now bringing three legal actions against the U.K.

Lack of Legal Representation

Hence the need to pay Rwanda to accept the arrival of those deported from the United Kingdom, when it has deemed their claims inadmissible. The Home Office now relies on evidence that there is a functioning asylum system in Rwanda but in the High Court challenges on 10 June 2022, it emerged that UNHCR believes access to the system was discriminatory, that LGBTQ claimants would be particularly at risk and that there was a lack of legal representation and interpreters and access to appeal mechanisms. Furthermore, as recently as 2018, the University of Oxford's Faculty of Law published a report that exposed the reality behind a similar scheme to deport asylum seekers Rwanda by Israel between 2014 and 2018. Its research found that only a handful of the 4,000 deportees remained there. This was because they were not granted access to any process to apply for asylum, were detained and ill-treated and not permitted to work as a consequence, they set out again on long and dangerous routes to safety.

European Court of Human Rights

It is significant that eventually it was the European Court of Human Rights, the court of the Council of Europe, to which the UK is still a member, that issued an emergency injunction to avoid a human rights breach pending a substantive legal challenges to deportations to Rwanda and grounded the plane. Popular reaction was to rail against foreign interference in UK courts. Few talked about the risk to the individuals due to be on the plane.

Nadine Finch



Scrap the Nationality & Borders Act

**All refugees
welcome**

**CLS Joined the
Demonstration outside
Rwanda House**

Prime Minister Holness selling out Jamaica at home and abroad

So once again, Prime Minister Andrew Holness is selling out Jamaica in attending the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. He has absolutely no principles and his actions also weaken CARICOM just as his party's founder did when he sabotaged the West Indies Federation in 1962.

The USA, in the person of their ineffectual President, has decreed that Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua not be invited to this meeting even though he has no right to do so. Biden's reason has something to do with democracy, or so he says. That's a bit rich from a country which also has no principles and is quite willing to stifle democracy if it has the slightest left-wing flavour. No problem with China, Saudi Arabia or Brazil of course.

Holness is willing to ignore the pleading of other Caribbean leaders, several of whom will not be attending. It is shameful to turn our back on a country with whom we had joined in battle against apartheid in South Africa, a country with a global humanitarian tradition like none other. Or on a country that has selflessly helped us survive over many years with its below-market-price oil supplies and financing. Or on a country that has been a beacon of people-power in the region for decades.

Holness is nothing less than a puppet with no principles other than wanting power. He deceived the country in 2016 with his \$1.5 million tax-break gimmick, every dollar of which was taken back from the people in other taxes. And in 2020, he compromised the COVID-19 protocols by calling an untimely election just because the opposition party was divided at the time. In contrast, he has now put postponed local elections yet again, due every four years but last held in 2016, with no solid reason.

If he gets his way with the appointment Commonwealth Secretary-General, that institution, like CARICOM, will lose whatever relevance it ever had, with Africa denied its turn in two years time, in line with the rotation-system precedent.

And now we are hearing that any move towards becoming a republic has nothing to do with principle but rather about trying to win the next general election due in 2025. Even the conservative Jamaica Gleaner newspaper is urging much quicker action, albeit that the hoped-for transition in this 60th year of (so-called) independence will not happen.

Perhaps the needed referendum should be on whether we return to formal colonial status either under the USA or UK !

ADDENDUM – PM Holness declares State of Emergency ahead of court ruling

On Friday 17 June, just hours before a scheduled court ruling on Roshaine Clarke, detained during a State of Emergency (SOE) in St. James in 2018 for over 263 days without charge, Prime Minister Holness announced yet another State of Emergency.

The court ruling by a three-member panel found the government in breach of the Constitution, ordering a payment of J\$18m in damages etc. Not only was Roshaine detained for far too long and never charged, but once ordered his release took a further 26 days.

This will not be the last such case, each costing the taxpayer money. The Office of the Public Defender says that nearly 4,000 persons were detained in the 2018 St James SOE, with only four per cent being charged, mainly with minor offences. In 2020, the courts found the detention of five other young men also unconstitutional and the SOE law itself is still before the Court of Appeal.

Earlier in the week, Holness said his administration has been struggling to respond to crime because "every move we make there is some legal argument or some political argument being made about the preservation of rights". Plans to deny any chance of bail to those charged with murder have also run into a hail of criticism from all sides in the last few days.

This lack of respect shown by Holness towards the Constitution, the courts and ordinary Jamaicans is alarming and could lead to formalized police state before the next election in 2025. One can only hope that the opposition PNP will oppose any extension of this current SOE beyond 14 days, which it can do so in the Senate.

Paul Ward, Jamaica

Jamaica Deportations

On 18th May 2022, 7 men of Jamaican heritage who had moved to the UK as children, were unjustly deported back to Jamaica, on very questionable grounds.

The UK Home Office in its current state, has been tearing through communities, terrorising local residents with immigration raids, and in the case of those referred to as the 'Jamaica 50', have been detaining scores of Jamaican nationals (who've built lives in the UK) at immigration detention centres.

On 11th May, CLS were present at a demonstration organised by Movement for Justice, outside of the Jamaican High Commission, London, in protest against the current Jamaican government's complicity in agreeing to accept vessels carrying deported Jamaican nationals. At the protest, those being detained at the detention centre (pending deportation), were communicating to all present via mobile phone (placed on loudspeaker and amplified via microphone), exactly how harrowing their experience of being unfairly detained was.

Immigration Raids

The way in which these men were rounded up during immigration raids, and were transported off to detention centres, despite the clear fact that many of the individuals moved here as young children, is unacceptable. This was the latest attempt by the Home Office to falsely assert that they are 'protecting the UK's borders', as part of their fascistic Nationality and Borders/anti-migrant push.

Some of these individuals had made wrong turns in their younger years, for which they have paid the price and have become assets to their communities, however, first and foremost these men are; fathers, sons, brothers, uncles and family members to people living here who are from Jamaica, who moved to the UK and who have contributed massively towards British society. For these men to just be chewed up and spat out by the system, after having dedicated their working lives to building families here, is a huge stain against the reputation of the UK.

The Home Office have been relentlessly attacking tight-knit communities, and things

have gotten progressively worse under the current government, who have enabled the Home Secretary to abuse her power in unfairly removing individuals who deserve to live their lives at home in the UK. It does not seem fair that Caribbean, Asian, Latin American, and other communities must live in constant fear of having their lives destroyed, and having their loved ones lives lost (in some cases), as a result of an increasingly unwelcoming and fascist-like environment.

Movement for Justice

Of the more than 20 individuals who were meant to have been on the flight, as a result of last-minute legal appeals, and ongoing pressure from Movement for Justice, the overall number on the flight was brought down to 7 (the suspected number of those actually on the flight). This figure within itself, still shows that the Home Office are more than willing to waste taxpayers' money, to remove individuals who are no threat to society, and in one man's case; had no past or current convictions whatsoever!

The current state that we find ourselves in, is the beginning of a very deplorable episode in British political history (being driven directly from England), wherein the Nationality and Borders Bill, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the Elections Bill, repealing of the Human Rights Act amongst other knee-jerk policies, are being rushed through Parliament, all as a part of the current government's attempts to stifle opposition and voices of dissent against their authoritarian regime.

Jamaica 50

The Jamaica 50, those who've already been unjustly deported, and other citizens who are at risk of deportation/directly facing the threat of deportation, do not, and never do deserve, to have their lives destroyed and uprooted as a result of the UK government's racist agenda. It is crucial that we all get behind community groups like Movement for Justice and others, legal professionals like Jacqueline McKenzie et al (of Leigh Day law practice), alongside other legal professionals and community orientated organisations, in opposing these unacceptable deportation flights and the ensuing chaos that comes with them.

Omar Leon

“WE ARE NOT SIMPLETONS”

The People of the Caribbean Rebuke the British State for its History of Kidnapping, Human Trafficking and running of Labour Camps.

Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS) joins the call of the people of the Caribbean in demanding reparations from Britain for its significant role in the kidnapping and human trafficking of Africans to work camps in the region. We also support the demands for a complete constitutional separation of these states from the United Kingdom, currently exercised via institution of the Monarchy.

CLS are aware of the significant opposition to so called “Royal Visits” to the region, whose purpose appears to be to attempt to strengthen this relationship whilst acting as a prop for a number of out of touch Caribbean governments.

We fully support the recent statement from the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission, which called for the cancellation of the Royal Visit to their country. The back-story is outlined below.

Prince Edward, the youngest child of the Monarch of the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II, and 14th in line of succession to the British throne, is visiting Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & Grenadines, and Antigua & Barbuda.

Accompanied by his wife, the April 22nd to 28th visit was planned to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year and celebrate “the culture, future and vibrancy of the islands”

Prince Edward and his wife have been branded 'oligarchs' by protesters who want to remove the Queen as head of state of their countries and are demanding reparations and a full apology for the part played by the institution of the Royal Family in the kidnapping, human trafficking of Africans to the Caribbean and the running of labour camps there.

The Grenada leg of their tour was postponed a day before their week-long trip began following strong protests from a significant sector of the population, which reflected the sentiments from across the region. It later emerged Grenada's Reparations Commission on slavery wished to meet with them.

Jomo Thomas, former chairman of the National Reparations Committee, said that people want to show their disgust that their governments had decided to 'lay down the red carpet for invaders', adding: 'Edward and his entourage should not be fêted in our land'. He said: 'They hunted us down, they kidnapped us, they stole us, they worked us. They owe us and they must now pay us'.

Here is the full text of the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission's statement:

Antiguans and Barbudans are a respectful people and so we join with our Governor General, our Prime Minister and Government in welcoming you to our nation as representatives of our Head of State, Queen of England, Elizabeth II.

We ask for a return of similar respect.

It has become common for members of the royal family and representatives of the Government of Britain to come to this region and lament that slavery was an ‘appalling atrocity’, that it was ‘abhorrent’, that ‘it should not have happened’. We have heard such from your former Prime Minister David Cameron and most recently from your father, the Prince of Wales and your nephew, Prince William. But such sentiments did not convey new knowledge to us. African people and their descendants – as most of us are – have known such since the middle of the sixteenth century. We have been on the receiving end of the barbarity. We hear the phony sanctimony of those who came before you that these crimes are a ‘stain on your history’. For us, they are the source of genocide and of continuing deep international injury, injustice and racism. We hope you will respect us by not repeating the mantra. We are not simpletons.

We share with you some other things that we know. We present these issues in a non-confrontational manner. Our reparations ideology seeks to foster and facilitate reconciliation between Europe and the nations of our region.

We know that the European slave trade, the enslavement of Africans, the genocide of Indigenous peoples of this region and the deceptive indentureship imposed on Asians were not acts of nature. They did not fall from heaven like manna, they did not occur like hurricanes or earthquakes. They resulted from fulfil acts of white Europeans aimed solely at Africans. We know that the British Crown – both as royal family and as institution, is historically documented as an active participant in the largest crimes against humanity of all time.

We know that as early as 1558, John Hawkins used one of Queen Elizabeth's ships on one of his slave-trading voyages and shared the profits with her – and further that she 'went on to exert Crown control over trade with West Africa, including trade in slaves, by issuing letters patent for such voyages in 1561, 1585, 1588, and 1592'.

We know that during the seventeenth century your family ancestors were owners and investors in the Royal African Company (and associated companies the Royal Gambia Company and the Royal Adventurers Company) set up under Charles II and his cousin King James II. We know that these companies, all dubbed 'Royal', engaged in the kidnap and transportation of hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean.

We know that the Crown 'owned' enslaved Africans as late as 1831, three years before the passage of the Emancipation Act. Those enslaved included our ancestors. We ask that you respect that.

We also know that no one today in your family was alive when the crimes against humanity were committed. So please do not tell us that again either – as others before you have done. We know however that everyone in your family continues to live in the splendour, pomp and wealth attained through the proceeds of the crimes.

We alert you that throughout your visit to the region, you will hear the call of Caribbean people to the British crown and Government for reparations for slavery. We know that a former British prime minister has described these Caribbean nations as 'the slums of the Empire'. We know that our leaders, respectful as they are, will find ingenious ways to hide the physical shame of slum from your eyes but we assure you that across our region, many still live in deep persistent poverty and social despair. The call for reparations is not an academic exercise. It is a demand to Britain and the other enslaving countries of Europe for partnership in a constructive strategy to meet the social and economic development gaps in the region, those imposed through slavery and colonialism and those that are perpetuated through the incredibly unjust existing neocolonial international order which Europe and the United States champions.

Respectfully, we ask a few questions and we hope that you will provide answers during one of the addresses you are scheduled to make here or in any other nation in your 'goodwill-don't-leave-us' tour. Why is it so hard for you to sincerely apologise for your nation's role in slavery, like decent human beings do when they offend? We know that 'acknowledging and accounting for wrongs is deeply enshrined within both British law and society'. Then, why is it that you cannot apologise for your nation's documented historical wrong? Do you think like members of your family before you seemed to think, that we are a sub-human species and therefore not worthy of an apology?

With utmost respect,
Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support
Commission
P.O. Box 571, St. John's, Antigua and
Barbuda



Pearl Priscilla Prescod 1920 - 1966: Caribbean/ British actor, singer, activist. A Black life lived large.

Compiled by Colin Prescod with the staff and volunteers of the Institute of Race Relations, London, Institute of Race Relations, 2021

This book is a celebration of the life and work of Pearl Prescod, a prominent activist, actor and singer in the UK in the 1950s and early 1960s. But she, like so many of her contemporaries, is too little known today. This booklet introduces us to these contemporaries and Pearl herself, locating the importance of what they achieved in a wider struggle.

Having arrived in Britain from Tobago in 1954 she had, like so many other Caribbean people, to navigate the multiple trip wires racism presented, not least in terms of work and housing. She initially found work on the switchboard of the West Indian Committee (WIC), who encouraged her to find work at the BBC, where she subsequently worked in radio and TV for a while.

By 1958 she had established an acting reputation in the theatre and gained a part alongside Cleo Laine, in the all-Black cast drama, 'Flesh to a Tiger', written by Jamaican Barry Beckford, and played in the Royal Court Theatre.

However, her most famous theatrical role was at the Old Vic theatre in 1965-66 as the Barbadian slave, Tituba, in a production of Arthur Miller's famous play, 'The Crucible'. She was the first Black actor to be invited to play in a National Theatre Company production, this one produced and directed by Laurence Olivier.

But this book is about much more than her many achievements and pioneering work. It also details some of her anti-racist activism in Britain and its international place. For example, as a member of the 'Pan African Players', Pearl appeared in the 1966 Pan-African Festival of Art and Culture in Dakar, Senegal, in two plays - A Wreath for Udomo by Peter Abraham, and Wind Versus Polygamy by Obi Egbuna.

As for the British connections, we are introduced both to many activists from the 1950s/ 60s – for



Claudia Jones and Pearl Prescod leading the March on Washington solidarity demonstration in London, August 31, 1963



example Claudia Jones, Pearl Conor, Amy Ashwood-Garvey – and their connections to events (such as the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester, and the founding of the West Indian Gazette) and campaigns/protests from the post-War years.

Pear Prescod initially came to the UK to study classical music but ended up singing at the head of marches as part of her participation in a wide range of political campaigns and cultural events. Hers was truly a Black Life Lived Large.

Copies of *Pearl Priscilla Prescod 1920 - 1966: Caribbean/British actor, singer, activist. A Black life lived large* are available from <https://irr.org.uk> Price: £7 plus £2.55 shipping. Free digital download is also available.

Danny Reilly, Plymouth

Our friend and Comrade Ozzi Warwick wrote this article for the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian. While he specifically refers to the cost of living crisis in Trinidad and Tobago, the arguments are the same the world over.

We follow this with images of the railway workers strike in Britain and a massive trade union demonstration in London. CLS supports workers everywhere who are fighting for a decent standard of living.

A Question of Survival

The recent counterproposal 1 by the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) to Trade Unions has brought into the spotlight a fundamental question. A question not about wages per se, the budget deficit, or even the usual economic indicators or the government's mantra of affordability.

It raises the issue of respect and human dignity for those that drive the economy. The fundamental question for most ordinary working people is the reproduction of daily life. This means the tasks or actions that enable us to stay alive eg, we need to eat every day, therefore the need to acquire and cook food regularly is essential.

To obtain and prepare food, we either need to farm and process food for ourselves or work for money to buy food and fuel.

The reproduction of daily life is enabled through access to utilities (energy as fuel or electricity, transportation, water, communication, and internet access) and cash income to pay for the goods and services we cannot provide for ourselves. Wages, therefore, stand as a paramount question to our survival. However, the reality for workers is that inflation has cut into real wages.

Plantation Economy

The discourse by bourgeois economists, government officials, or commentators focuses on macroeconomic indicators and the myth that wages drive inflation. However, that discourse has nothing to do with people's livelihood and their day today struggle to survive in this country. Indeed, the PostFordism plantation economy we are living in has resulted in the displacement of thousands of workers from decent jobs.



The closure of the steel industry, the refinery, petrochemical, and manufacturing plants have all removed goodpaying jobs that today have been replaced with lowpaying ones with little or no terms and conditions. Additionally, social wages have disappeared as terms and conditions were stripped away with the proliferation of contract work, creating a new precariat class.

As the cost of social reproduction increased, the ability of families to keep up with this cost has decreased. This is a form of dispossession and further alienation of the people. As the cost of commodities necessary for basic survival increases the cost of the commodity, labour power has decreased. This has led to a crisis within households. Therefore, to have a decent life and live with dignity it is becoming further and further out of the reach of most people.

With this occurring, the question must be asked, how can the labour force provide for itself if they are losing their market power to feed their children and send them to school? Sadly, this debilitating crisis is completely ignored by the Government. They fail to recognise that such catastrophes within households are causing social and economic crises which means the psychological contract that keeps a society functioning is gone.

A case of survival

The question of survival must also be understood against the backdrop of two critical statements made by two senior government officials. The first was, the Prime Minister saying that the gap between rich and poor is a cliché. The second was the Minister of Energy who stated that people have a good life in Trinidad and Tobago. The sad reality is this is far from the truth. The truth and the reality which are so easily dismissed by politicians and bourgeois economists is that we have become a society of survival. We wake each morning to begin our day of work only to receive a paycheque that barely covers, food, transport, and rent. We must also remember that whilst an average household may be three persons, many waged workers also must assist members of their extended family beyond those that reside within their household. And what of the value of our labourpower? We expend our mental and physical capacities to fulfil tasks that enable society to function. However, in the same society with institutions boasting of hundreds of millions of dollars in profit, thousands of workers are barely surviving. The social relations of production are changing and there is less and less investment in social formations. In fact, there is a conceptual framework that sees wages as an expense rather than an investment. One clear example of this barbaric notion is regarding the Minister of Finance who continually sees government investment in social reproduction as costs, whether it is education, health, social security, subsidies, etc. There is a conceptual disconnect between households and the wider economy.

The Impact of Inflation

Let us also consider inflation which stood at 21.82% between 2014 and 2021. This means a reduction in real wages by approximately 20%. If you earned \$6,000 in 2013, you now have a purchasing power of \$4,800. The general inflation rate of 21.82% is bad enough, yet the situation is worse for essentials such as food, transport, and rent. Food for a family of four has increased by 44.4%, transport by 43%, and rent by 10.21%. This means in real terms that people in 2013 who were already struggling to pay a food bill of \$1,000 per month now have to pay \$1,444. Rent of \$3,000 will be \$3,300. Transport of \$750 would now be \$1,072—especially when you consider the increase in fuel prices not once, twice, three times but four times in eight years. This represents an additional \$1,066 per month that a worker now has to find on just three items. These are drivers of inflation but do not cover critical expenditures like utilities, basic household items, clothing, and health care. As if all this is not enough, workers struggling to pay rent, or a mortgage, now have a property tax to pay come at the end of this year. The counteroffer of 2% over 8 years, which is clearly another slap in the face towards workers means an increase on a salary of \$6,000 by just a meagre \$120. This counteroffer can only be described as a disrespect, a disregard, and a complete insult to all workers.

Growing Workers' Indebtedness

Now with all that being said, when wages do not move, an important question that those in authority must ask is, where are workers supposed to find these additional funds to survive? How are people surviving? The fact is, there is a significant reduction in purchasing power and the workers' quality of life as survival comes by increasing the level of their personal debt. Many people have become greatly indebted with loans from credit unions, banks, and other financial institutions, credit cards, and borrowing money from friends and family—\$200 can make the difference in getting by for a couple of days for food or transport to go to work in order to exchange their labour power for a wage that allows them to reproduce their daily life. In terms of shelter, one of the most basic human needs, the housing market outside HDC is now completely outside the reach of most public officers. The average cost of a home outside the HDC market is between \$1.5 to \$2 million. A \$1.5 million home with a 5% interest rate is a monthly mortgage payment of \$7,247, a cost outside the reach of daily rated workers, nurses, teachers, and other public officers.

Need for Social Justice

The CPO's counterproposal and the Government's defence expose the real contradiction in our postcolonial independent society. How can a society that was built on social justice and social protection for its citizens now abandon these values for a failed economic model which has proven spatially and temporally to widen the inequality gap?

Instead of creating jobs, and improving the quality of life of ordinary people, our social order extracts more from workers and transfers the collective wealth to a few elites in the form of profits, contracts, and dividends. This contradiction has emerged sharply under the current regime. It is clear that in 2022 old colonial ideas have found roots within a regime whose ideology places profits and indicators before the lives of its citizens. The current approach taken by the CPO as an agent of the Government does not value ordinary working people as the true beneficiaries of the Republic, even as ordinary working people ensure the full functioning of the Republic. As it stands now, the reproduction of daily life is under attack from PNM neoliberalism. Workers have no choice but to resist neoliberalism to save their own lives. Organised in and working through their Trade Unions, workers will have to advance the restoration of decency, an equitable social contract, and the social safety net through competent and compassionate socioeconomic policies and governance. After all, it is a question of survival for workers and our fragile society.

■ **Ozzi Warwick** is the General Secretary of JTUM and the Chief Education and Research Officer of the OWTU.

And in Britain:



Celebrating the life of Gordon Hutchins, anti-racist and anti-Apartheid freedom fighter

There is no template that defines what makes a progressive; a freedom fighter; and/or an anti-racist. This is illustrated by the life of the late Gordon Hutchins who died earlier this year at the age of 87. Caribbean Labour Solidarity takes this opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one such comrades and marks the rich life of Comrade Gordon Hutchins, who died earlier this year.

A memorial gathering held for Gordon earlier this year at the Jenny Lee Gardens, Kings College Hospital*, was attended by Solomon Mhlana, First Secretary (Political) at the South African Embassy. Addressing the many attendees, Mr Mhlana stated that the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African people were, "...From the bottom of our hearts we are grateful..." for the action that Gordon and his comrades took in combating the racist Apartheid regime.

Who was Gordon Hutchins?

Born in 1933 Gordon Hutchins, said "On graduating from an approved school BTS formidable, Portishead, Somerset, I joined the merchant Navy". Following which he sailed to many countries and ended up in New Zealand where he became a citizen and lived for several years.

As a young working-class man, he was aware of the exploitation of working people and joined the Communist Party of New Zealand. He became very involved in solidarity action with its indigenous people, the Maori.

By the early 1960s he had returned to Britain, where he continued his activism. For example, in a demonstration outside the London Embassy of the then fascist regime in Spain, he was arrested and served 30 days in Brixton prison.

On the other side of the world there was a need for support and action. In the mid-1960s, the leaders of the liberation movement in South Africa were either in prison or in exile and the remnants of the ANC and South African Communist Party were underground.

The ANC approached white radicals in London to travel to South Africa as tourists and then distribute leaflets by means of harmless bucket bombs. Later known as the London Recruits**, these extremely brave people were warned that if they were caught, as two were, they would be tortured and imprisoned. Nonetheless, all those who approached to volunteer did so including Gordon.

In 1971, he travelled to Port Elizabeth with a friend and comrade Bob Condon.

"Our mission came together when we visited the Ford motor works and felt we just had to set up a bucket bomb near the main workers entrance ", he wrote in London Recruits* a book about the volunteers.

"In all we set up six bucket bombs in various places. We heard one go off at the memorial in the centre of Port Elizabeth. It gave us a certain satisfaction, but not as much as a front-page photograph in the following days paper. It depicted a policeman chasing a floating leaflet. The leaflets were written in Xhosa and addressed to black South Africans "

On his return Gordon continued working in small factories in London, always an active trade unionist and anti-racist. He later became a campaigning pensioner in the Lambeth Pensioners Action Group. He was a keen supporter of women's rights and remains, as ever, a firm anti-racist.

The Veterans' League of the ANC of South Africa said in a message: "Our people owe a great deal to internationalists such as comrade Gordon Hutchins and the courageous solidarity in action, which played a significant role in assisting our people in overthrowing the brutal Apartheid regime".

*Kings College Hospital website: <https://www.kch.nhs.uk/news/public/news/view/37756>

**London Recruits: The Secret War Against Apartheid (2012) The amazing story of young, white, non-South African people who went on secret missions to South Africa to help overthrow the apartheid regime. Edited and compiled by Ken Keable, with an introduction by Ronnie Kasrils and a foreword by Pallo Jordan. This book inspired a documentary film, London Recruits, directed by Gordon Main. <https://www.londonrecruits.org.uk/>

Dennot Nyack

The London Recruits

I am very pleased that our organisation, CLS is printing this tribute to my late friend Gordon Hutchins. In fact it is most appropriate this is happening because, on a May Day march some years ago, Comrade Luke might remember, Gordon and I carried the CLS banner part of the way.

I first met Gordon as a member of a pensioners organisation LAMPAG, in Lambeth just over ten years ago and we soon became good friends, meeting regularly to have a cup of tea and chat. He had been an active Communist and trade unionist but was very modest about his own activism and it was only rereading my copy of London Recruits that I realised he had been one of those very brave women and men who went to South Africa on behalf of the liberation movement between 1967 and 1986.

After the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other leaders of the ANC and the South African Communist Party and the forced exile of others, Oliver Tambo, leader in exile of the ANC, realised the importance of letting South Africans within the country know that their liberation movements were still in existence. So he ordered a younger Comrade, Ronnie Kasrils, to go to London and recruit white anti racists to carry out missions in South Africa, posing as tourists. Ronnie warned all those who were approached to go that if they were caught, they would certainly be tortured and imprisoned and no help could be given. The vast majority were members of the Young Communist League and the Communist Party and none of those approached refused to go. Two volunteers were caught tortured and then imprisoned so the risk was real. The volunteers' missions included at first posting ANC material from post boxes, setting up "bucket bombs" which threw up hundreds of leaflets into the air at factories and railway stations where there were large numbers of Black workers and eventually, smuggling weapons into the country.

Sworn to secrecy because of security, with apartheid agents active in Britain, the volunteers had to pretend to be away on holiday to employers, families and friends and on return, they, like Gordon, returned to work and political duties. It was only after the end of the racist regime in South Africa, that Ronnie Kasrils thought that the stories of the London Recruits should be put on record. He alongside other liberation movement leaders realised the importance of the work the volunteers had done in keeping their organisations alive in South Africa with the constant propaganda leaflets and pamphlets they had distributed under circumstances of great danger. Ronnie came to London and with the help of an early

volunteer Ken Keable, contacted as many as possible of the recruits, some of whom no longer lived in Britain, to write their accounts of their missions to South Africa. Ken collected these and the book was published as "London Recruits The Secret War Against Apartheid" published by Merlin, with all royalties going to The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund

David Horsley



Gordon Hutchins and friends in garden



The Significance of Reparations

Reparations for the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Indigenous people is one of the most significant issues for the Caribbean region today and the immediate future.

The legacy of slavery and colonialism has left the region with huge social, financial and political difficulties. A massive historical crime was committed by the British and unless they are held to account - we will continue to suffer racism, poverty, and social dislocation in the Caribbean.

The fight for reparations began from the time of manumission, when the slave owners received payment for loss of "property" and the enslaved received not a penny for their forced labour. Our ancestors would have felt the injustice of that dastardly act in 1833 that was supposed to have liberated them and they sought recompense in any way they are could - including the taking of property from the enslavers.

The movement for reparatory justice was intensified in the 1930s by the organised labour movement in the region. Our job is to keep up the scream until those that benefited sit down at the table to talk. We will have to hone our arguments. We are fortunate in having some outstanding theorists and historian activists who have provided almost all the ammunition we need to win the argument. Our task is to get the information into the hands of the masses-black and white and not only in the Caribbean but wherever we find ourselves on the planet. We need shout from the tree tops and roof-tops until they hear our cry for justice.

Crime against our Ancestors

The fight for reparations gives us opportunity to raise the awareness of the masses in the region and the world about the crime committed against our ancestors and how it affects us today. It will take each and every one of us to get the information out. We will have to inform ourselves and let the masses know about the outstanding theorists and activists whose work has got us to the place of struggle that we occupy today. From the freedom fighters like Nanny of the Maroons in Jamaica, Coffy and Accabre in the Berbice rebellions in Guyana, Toussaint and Dessalines in Haiti, Feddon and Marryshow in Grenada, Captain Cipriani in Trinidad and Tobago to mention a few. We will have to get familiar with the works of Arthur Lewis who first raised the question of reparations with the British in 1936. With the work of C. L. R. James and his book *The Black Jacobins*, of Eric Williams and his *Capitalism and Slavery*, of Richard Hart and his *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery*, of the activism of David Comissiong, and Hilary Beckles with his *Britain's Black Debt and How Europe Underdeveloped the Caribbean*, to name a few who need become household names if we are to win the battle for reparations.

Chronic Ill Health

We will need to make it real for those who would deny the negative effects of slavery and colonialism. From my own family and friends, I know only too well the effects of the poverty in the region as I regularly make remittances. I know of the ill health that is chronic in the region because of a slave diet. My grandmother lost a leg through diabetes - now her great-granddaughter has suffered the same fate to the same disease. A sister has suffered with mental health problems because of the sheer hardship of life in Guyana. We have one of the highest suicide rates in the world, we have the highest teenage pregnancy in the region. Inequality is a chronic problem in the country with a gulf opening up between the have and have-nots. The brutality of slavery has instilled patterns of violence that has left the region with some of the highest murder rates and domestic violence in the world.

Thief in the Night

The British who are trying to sneak away like a thief in the night, from this crime scene need to understand that we are not fooled. They can no longer use divide and rule to weaken our fight for justice-we are unto their cunning and tricks and are coming after them. And we will be relentless-they can run but they can't hide.

300 years

We should be under no illusions that this will be a quick and short fight. We have a battle on our hands, and it is one we cannot afford to lose. What kind of a future for the Caribbean will be determined by our success or failure in mounting a campaign to force those that benefited from the enslavement of our ancestors for more than 300 years to make reparations.

Some of my friends who are good with economics have made calculations on just how much debt is owed for the unpaid labour of millions of enslaved Africans over the centuries. The figures are mind boggling and would bankrupt many of the bandits. No point in that for us, as then they won't be able to pay their debt. This is why we say: Let's sit down and talk.

Raising awareness about the oppression of slavery, colonialism and imperialism is crucial in the success of the movement for reparations. We have to do the work where we find ourselves with what we have. We have no gun boats to hold them to account but we have the pen and the masses who have been wronged on our side in this battle.

Those that would deny us reparations like to say slavery was a long time ago and we should move on. Well, they need to understand that it is not that easy to move on from 300 years of brutality of the type recorded in one Parish in Jamaica that Richard Hart brings to our attention:

1776: Jack, for being a runaway: *"to be hanged by the neck until he is dead, and his head to be cut off in the most public place on the sd. Estate"*.

Coach: for *"uttering many rebellious expressions"* against his overseer *"to be hanged...and his head to be afterwards separated and exposed"*.

Adam: for running away: *"to have a halter put about his neck, and one of his ears nailed to a post, and that the executioner do cause the said ear to be cut off close to his head"*.

Plato: *"for having fresh veal found upon him belonging to Roselle plantation. "to have both his ears cut off close to his head, to be worked in chains for twelve months, and the first Monday in every month to receive 39 lashes with a cat-o-nine tails on his bare back each time"*.

19 April 1783: Priscilla, for running away, *"both her ears cut off close to her head immediately, to receive 39 lashes the first Monday in every month for one year and to be worked in irons during that time"*.

5th July 1780: Jackson for running away: *"to have his right ear cut off close to his head, his nose slit, and to be branded on each cheek with the plantation mark"*.

1767: Quaco, for being found armed with a military offensive weapon called a cutlass and using it in a rebellious manner against one of Charlie Blair Esquire's negroes who endeavoured to catch him for being a runaway for some months: *"to have both his ears cut off close to his head and also the great tendon, commonly known by the name of Tendon Achilles, of his left leg to be separated or cut asunder in such manner as it may not reunite"*.

The paying of reparations would go some way towards healing the hurts of slavery by acknowledging that a wrong was done. White people will be absolved of the guilt for the crime that was committed in their name. The critical examination of the ideology of racism to justify slavery, will cause some to reconsider the misinformation they have been fed. An apology will go somewhere towards healing the hurts of racism directed at black people. Black people will understand that the lies told about them had nothing to do with reality and were simply a ploy to extract profit from their ancestors labour.

The repressive structures of colonialism are still in place. A justice system that discriminates against the poor and a repressive often brutal police force to subjugate the masses are still in operation. Discriminatory legislation against gays and children and women need to be jettisoned.

The self-hatred the apartheid colonial regime instilled are still manifested through the skin colourism oppression endemic in our societies and manifested by the pandemic of skin bleaching in the region.

Reclaiming love of self is part of the healing of the region that needs to take place.

When we take on the task of fighting for reparations, we are, in effect, trying to change the world.

Black and white people have a role in challenging a racist ideology that has existed for at least 500 years and has infected the whole world. When we see the way black people are treated trying to escape the war in Ukraine, or crossing the English Channel, or the hostile environment of the Windrush generation or the deportations we can be in no doubt that racism is alive and well. When we see the figures about black people and unemployment, and deaths in police custody and the disproportionate deaths of the covid pandemic, we know we have a lot of work to do.

We have to do the work in the Caribbean, of raising awareness about the fight for reparations and the missions /support groups must be established in working class and poor communities. We need them to be engaged and informed in this battle for justice.

We have to fight wherever we find ourselves, we at Caribbean Labour Solidarity have some huge shoulders to stand on-men like one of our founding members the late Richard Hart our honorary president and Lord Gifford the advocate who was the first to raise the demand for reparations in the House of Lords. CLS joins with Anti-racist organisations, Trade unions, MP's and solidarity groups in the fight for reparations.

Victory will be ours!

Luke Daniels - President, CLS



**CLS members at the launch of "Sir Robert Geffrye and the Business of Slavery"
at Bookmarks bookshop in London**

Government Industrial School in Barbados by *Marsha Hinds*

I started serving as the deputy chair of the Government Industrial School in Barbados (called the GIS), on the appointment of the Governor General and at the pleasure of the Minister responsible for reformatory schools on August 1, 2018. I must admit that although by that time I had been working with women and girls' advocacy for just about 18 years I did not know much about the school. Every child who grows up in Barbados will get a threat or two about being sent to the school for being 'own way' but the truth is not many people who grow up in middle or upper class Barbados will ever interact with the institution.

The Government Industrial School was opened in 1883, forty-nine years after the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean. The major purpose of the school was to house children who did not have parents or whose parents did not have the means to provide for their children. The Industrial Schools across the Caribbean extracted free labour from children in exchange for shelter and clothing. Flogging was allowed in the Schools and researcher, Dr. Shani Roper reported in a recent online forum on the topic of "Children in State Care" that records show that Barbados used the most flogging. The early 1900s saw the passage of two pieces of legislation - the Reformatory and Industrial Schools (1926) and the Juvenile Offenders Act (1936). These two pieces of legislation are still what govern the fate of children inside the juvenile justice system in 2022 Barbados. Despite the amendments to the Act over the years it is still archaic and ill-suited to govern a modern juvenile justice approach. It is gaps such as this in colonial repair that tempered my excitement about Barbados becoming a republic in November 2021. If you are still governing the future of Barbados under repressive, colonial law, what sense is it to expend money we borrowed from the International Monetary Fund on extravagant ceremony when the lives of the majority of Barbadians stand to see no improvement or material change?

A part of the responsibility of the Board of the School was to conduct inspections to ensure that all was well with the various stakeholders within the School. The fact that I had enough audacity to actually carry out the inspections was what eventually led to me losing the pleasure of the Minister and being fired in March 2021, for choosing to whistle blow publicly when I learnt of a 14-year-old girl resident being held naked in a cell under the conditions of solitary confinement. That incident was not where my journey with anomalies related to the children in care began. It was very much the 'straw that broke donkey's back'. When I started the tenure, the institution was run by an individual who was very proud to note that he had been at the institution since 1982. He had grown accustomed to commanding the institution with no reporting lines and no oversight from anyone. He was not required to write annual reports nor financial reports. Although the School is a government entity, it had never attracted the attention of the auditor general nor other state control mechanisms like the Child Care Board. The administration did not take kindly to my questioning or inspection. On my first visit to the Government Industrial School, I requested to see the breakfast service for the male residents of the School. Numerous people had reached out to me with complaints about how the children of the facility were being fed. That visit, breakfast was served around 8:30 in the morning. I remember asking whether dry cereal and fruit was put out before that. I was told that it was not. The reason for my question was that the residents of the GIS would have been accustomed to a routine that required them to be at school by 8:30 in the morning. Many of them, unless they lived across the road from the school they attended would have had to be awake between 5:30 and 6:00 in the morning to catch school buses or other types of transportation to school. Having breakfast at 8:30 put them 3 hours behind their usual schedule.

The breakfast served at 8:30 consisted of canned spam fried with two or three crackers per boy and a cup of hot chocolate. There was no water offered, there was no fruit offered and there were no alternative food selections. The breakfast offered was not enough to satisfy teenaged boys. Trying to report what I had seen quickly brought me into another realization about the set up of the School. The Board of the Government Industrial School is advisory. That means that the Board only creates policy positions and passes those onto the Minister.

Based on how government structures in the Caribbean work, the Minister would then have to pass the requests back to the permanent secretary of the Ministry who then instruct the senior administrative staff of the school. The cumbersome reporting lines are a part of the disconnect in policy and practice at the School.

The second major concern for me was the lack of educational and skills training programming at the School. The GIS is housed under the Ministry of Home Affairs, like the adult prison facility. There is no official document or memorandum of understanding establishing a status between the School and the Ministry of Education. There is no clear protocol on whether residents remain on the register of their substantive schools. The residents who can continue schooling in regular educational settings are not allowed to do so. There is an ad hoc programme of education offered by the staff of the GIS, but there is no curriculum developed, there are no individual educational plans created for the children and the ones who do complete Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) certification are largely self taught. In contravention of the rights of children deprived of their liberty, children who complete CXC while resident at the GIS have that printed on their certificates. In a small society like Barbados that is a branding that is hard to overcome in the job market.

A third frustration I quickly ran into was how the outdated and archaic frameworks for juvenile justice in Barbados were continuing to have negative impacts on children in the juvenile justice system. Although there were mounds of policy documents, reports about concerns that UNICEF had highlighted and commitments to update laws and change practices at the mistrial and governmental levels, the same abuse that was outlined by residents of the institution as far back as the 1980s and continued under my tenure as deputy chair. Simple actions had not been taken. For instance, UNICEF reclassified children in the juvenile justice system into children in conflict with the law and children in need of care. Given the history of the industrial schools in Barbados and the Caribbean, where children were criminalized at Emancipation or in the interwar years for not having family or for being poor, these two clear streams of children was an important step in terms of modernizing the juvenile justice system. It paved the way for the removal of old archaic charges such as wandering to be discarded. There are institutional abuses at both sections of the Government Industrial School but the charge of wandering has gender specific implications for girls.

Girls who were facing family instability, which often resulted from them being raped or molested were being charged for wandering as they tried to escape abuse. Girls who were in other state facilities and facing abuses who tried to escape these environments were charged with wandering. Girls who had started normal teenaged exploration of sex with boys in similar age category to them were charged with wandering. In many cases, these children only came into contact with the juvenile justice system because their parents reached out to the state apparatus to try to seek help and support for their children and not because they wanted them incarcerated. The parents were then overruled when their children were made wards of the court and although their parental rights were never officially revoked, they lost the ability to make medical decisions for their children, educational decisions or further decisions about legal outcomes. When girls are charged with wandering in Barbados, they are forced to have vaginal examinations as a part of the police investigation process. They are given the morning after pill as well. Even if attorneys at law representing the children or parents do not give consent, these measures are taken.

The juvenile justice system in Barbados is completely broken and despite the country having international obligations under conventions such as CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention of Belém do Pará, old colonial practices persist. The Minister has a substantial amount of power to change the situation at the GIS. While the previous Minister has released some of the children in the facility in need of care, under the current Minister girls charged for wandering continue to be criminalized. Unless the region and the world pay attention, the children of Barbados will not be safe. Coloniality has killed out national conscience and only worldwide outrage can awaken change.

Chelsea Bridge Death

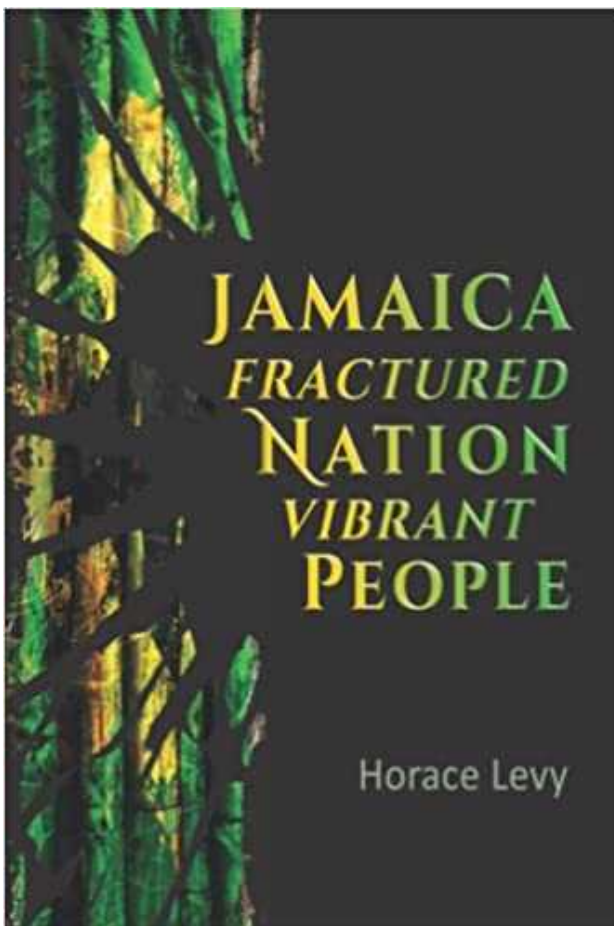
We were both alarmed and distressed to witness how police treated a person who suffers from mental illness with a taser. According to police regulations, a taser is only to be used as a last resort in a life threatening emergency. Police are 3 times more likely to use tasers on black and brown people and they are used to both make an arrest as well as to "control" a suspect after arrest. This is not life threatening or an emergency, it is torture by using electricity. Tasers have been used on people as young as 12 years old and they have caused the death of 23 people. The man who had been tasered had already dropped the supposed screwdriver he was allegedly holding, but was still shocked with a taser. It is obvious the man jumped off the bridge as he was so terrified that he was going to be killed by the police and that he believed that by jumping into the river was his only way to escape the police.



Police are not mental health nurses but they are not empowered to be executioners either. We do not have the death penalty for those people who are mentally ill for a reason. These people are mentally ill and not responsible for their actions. This is one more example of the failure of "Care in the Community" (46.8% patients in mental hospitals are BAME) and "Care by the Police" for vulnerable people in crises.

We condemn the excessive use of force by the police officers and we demand that "Care in the Community" be ended and that patients suffer from mental health crises be dealt with by trained medical staff and not left to the police who use excessive force methods that can lead to the injury and even death of vulnerable mental patients.

Raphael Andrews



An account of the first 101 years of Jamaica's modern history, this book begins by signalling the importance of the cultural component of Jamaica's recent history but goes on to attend more to the politics, economics and gradual development of civil society, in order to catch the country's trajectory and so better understand current stalemates and get a glimpse of what the near future can bring. It is the both the fractures or divisions across Jamaica created by the upper and political classes and lower classes creativity in music and sport joined with valuable input of civil society toward good governance that the book narrates. Suggestions for civil society succeeding in bridging the fractures where the political parties have failed make up the content of the final third part of the book.



Committee for Human Rights in Grenada (UK)

CHRG Press Release

Maurice Bishop's Remains

There is now conclusive documentary evidence that the remains of former Prime Minister of Grenada, Maurice Bishop were removed by the United States forces during their invasion in 1983 and that the Grenadian Government has been aware of this for some years.

As previously reported, in a document entitled Library of Congress (extracts of an interview with Charles Anthony Gillespie, who served as the interim Charge d' Affaires and Chief of Mission during the United States invasion of Grenada in 1983), Mr Gillespie makes reference to a visit to Grenada by a Congressional delegation on 4th November 1983 – ten days after the invasion on October 25th 1983.

Gillespie states: "They flew into Grenada, landing at Point Salines. I met them and got into the car with Congressmen Foley and Cheney and Assistant Secretary Motley.. . So, as we drove to the hotel where they were going to be put up, we started our major show and tell for these guys. They made their inquiries. I would tell them, "Marines were killed here. Helicopters were there. This was the headquarters. This was the hospital that was attacked. This is where this and this incident happened. This was all shot up. This is where Maurice Bishop's body was found," and so forth."

We consider that it is reasonable to believe if Gillespie was able to point this out on 4th November, it is clear that the body / bodies had been discovered by the US forces much earlier than 9th November when they subsequently claimed.

Towards the end of the interview, Mr Gillespie indicates, "I returned to being Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caribbean in March 1984. We haven't covered a few small details involving the forensic examination of Maurice Bishop's body. I went out with a team from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. These guys were just remarkable going over those remains. They wanted to have me there so that I could understand what they were doing." Although it's unclear whether Gillespie went out to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in (AFIP) in Washington DC, this is conclusive evidence that the US forces had the body of Maurice Bishop and that they subjected it to forensic examination. The body must therefore have been whole, which is contrary to what the jury were told by the prosecution in the trial of the Grenada 17.

That the US has the remains is confirmed in a recently leaked Government of Grenada cable from 2007 which states, "Assistant Secretary Thomas A. Shannon promised Mitchell in a one to one meeting in June, when the Prime Minister was in Washington for the conference on the Caribbean, that the USG (United States Government) would make another effort to search U.S. files to determine the location of the bodies of the former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and members of his cabinet." This is a clear admission that the U.S. has the remains, and that the Prime Minister was aware of this.

What is not clear is whether any request has been made for the return of the remains. Following the ruling of the Privy Council in February 2007 that the life sentences given to the Grenada 17 were invalid, the case was returned to The Grenadian Supreme Court which subsequently handed down reduced sentences on June 27th.

A leaked cable States: "Prime Minister Mitchell called Charge on June 28 to say that he was concerned about the sentences, but reiterated that the GOG (Government of Grenada) would abide by the ruling. He was planning to address the nation soon. Mitchell added that

he was getting a lot of pressure from “people, including my own family”, who say he is not pushing the United States hard enough to tell where “they” put the bodies. He said he had “asked” the Under Secretary (sic) for help in locating them”.

However, an extract from a further cable claims that the Prime Minister: “Mitchell did not actually raise the issue in his meeting with Assistant Secretary Shannon, but announced that he had in the subsequent press conference. The PM is continuing to maintain this fiction.”

The families of those who were killed on Fort Rupert have the right to have closure and to be able to give the remains of their loved ones a decent burial. CHRG is therefore calling on the Grenadian Government to demand the immediate return of the remains of Maurice Bishop and the others, and to explain to the people of Grenada what actions they have taken in the past to secure the return of the remains.

Alan Scott, (CHRG,UK, Secretary)

Metropolitan Police watchdog receives eight more referrals involving ‘inhumane’ strip searches of children

Child Q was strip searched by female Metropolitan Police officers in 2020 after she was wrongly suspected of carrying cannabis at her east London school. (See *Cutlass 20*)

The local child safeguarding practice review, conducted by City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, concluded the strip search should never have happened, and racism “was likely to have been an influencing factor.”

A second anonymous teenager was arrested and stripped searched by six officers in front of male officers. A further eight referrals involving “inhumane” strip searches of children have been made to the police watchdog

Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP Diane Abbott said:

“I have always suspected that Child Q was not an isolated incident.

“We also know that the police records on strip searches are an underestimate because many of these strip searches take place while the child is in custody and are not recorded.

“I am glad that these further strip searches are being investigated. We need to get all the facts on this disturbing practice.”

from the *Morning Star*



OPEN LETTER

Professor Gus John

To: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL

Thank you for your invitation to the unveiling ceremony on Windrush Day, 22 June, for the National Windrush Monument inside London Waterloo Station, 'created by Basil Watson, the internationally renowned Jamaican artist'.

The invitation states that 'the ceremony will celebrate the lives, contribution and legacy of those who came to the UK from the Caribbean from 1948 to 1971 and their descendants, culminating in the unveiling of this fitting monument, which can be embraced by future generations and the nation for decades to come'.

I am still puzzled as to why I was sent that invitation, as I am on public record as condemning the entire Windrush construct as a sham and as a gross distortion of the relationship between the African diaspora, from the Caribbean and the African continent, and Britain.

The invitation noted that 'the event will be attended by guests that embody the spirit of diversity that our country has to offer (whatever that might mean). These will include notable British Caribbean individuals who have made a lasting contribution to the UK'.

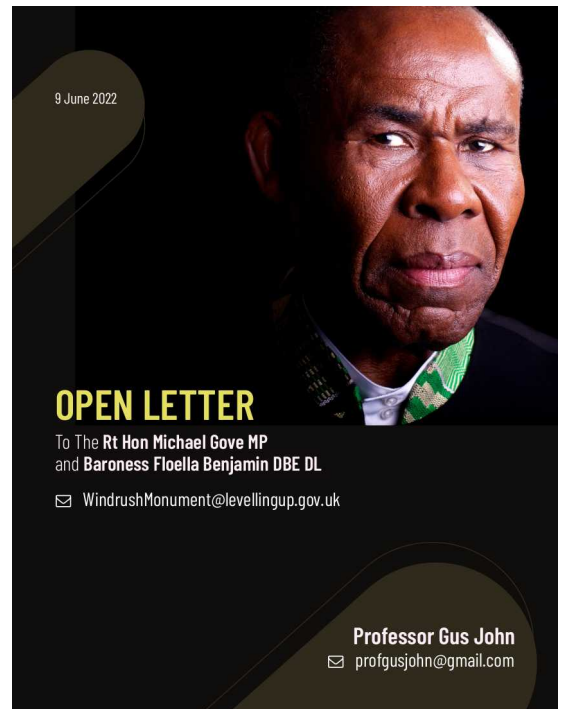
Significantly, this monument is being unveiled in the same month that Her Imperial Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, celebrates 70 years as British monarch. During those 70 years, the British state has perpetuated a culture of racism that has violated the human rights of Black Commonwealth and of British born and naturalised citizens, marring their lives and killing thousands of them, directly through brutalisation while in the custody of the state and indirectly through the impact of racism on their life chances and their health and wellbeing.

Just one week after I received your invitation, the Guardian ran a story of a report on the Windrush Scandal which the Home Office is said to be refusing to release and which argued, among other damning findings, that the scandal was the culmination of '30 years of racist immigration laws'.

Throughout those 30 years and more, Her Imperial Majesty presided at the opening of Parliament and ushered into immigration legislation that was more racist in every iteration, including the legislation in 2014 and 2016 that framed 'the hostile environment'.

In 1945, the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. That congress, attended by pan-Africanists, anti-colonial campaigners and leaders of workers' movements across the Caribbean, made a number of demands of the British state, including that Britain should take action against the racism Black people were suffering, especially those who had risked life and limb and given loyal service to the British Crown in the Second World War. The principal message to Britain from that congress was that those subjects of the British Crown who risked their lives in defeating Nazism should not have to face racism and Nazism in the very country they had fought to defend.

That was two years before the Steam Ship Almanzora arrived in Southampton from the Caribbean on 21 December 1947, carrying 200 ex-service personnel. Six months later, the SS Windrush docked at Tilbury. Among its 500 passengers were many whom, like those on the Almanzora,



Britain had abandoned to their fate once they were returned to the Caribbean after demob, thus necessitating their return to this country in search of bread and opportunity to rebuild their lives. It is those very citizens who, even though they were being killed often in greater numbers than their white counterparts in theatres of war, were denied the same rights, rewards and awards as them. Because they were Black, they were not allowed to rise to the rank of 'officer', despite phenomenal acts of bravery in some cases. On demob, they had been returned to the colonies to a life of penury, many having had to place themselves at the mercy of their communities, especially if they were still overcoming physical injuries and mental trauma.

Many of the so-called Windrush Generation will have lived cheek by jowl with them as they joined that extensive reserve pool of labour Britain had created and left impoverished across the Caribbean.

Yet, in a leaflet publicising the Windrush Anniversary Service in Westminster Abbey in June 2018, the organisers claimed that those who arrived on the Windrush 'came seeking adventure', as if they suddenly decided to club together and come on safari to Britain. As if they did not have enough adventure on the killing fields of Europe.

The Windrush Commemoration Committee projects the monument as 'an ambitious public artwork that stands as a testament to the contribution of Caribbean pioneers in communities across the United Kingdom'. They claim that 'it will create a permanent place of reflection and inspiration and be a visible statement of our shared history and heritage'.

But the Windrush narrative itself erases that shared history and heritage and refers lazily to 'the Windrush generation' as if they had no past and no experience with Britain before arriving in Britain. It also presents those who came in 1948 and after as pioneers who clocked up notable accomplishments in a free and open society in which they enjoyed equal opportunities for their considerable talents to flourish.

There is over-emphasis on the contribution and legacy of those who came from the Caribbean and on the extent to which we have helped to build modern Britain, but no mention of the fact that ours has been a perennial struggle against systemic racism, neo-fascism and English nationalism. As such, those who came in 1947 and 1948 have been in a continuity of struggle with the Caribbean and African Diaspora that had lived and struggled against colonialism and racism since the end of the 19th century, at least.

So, whatever grandiose notions those who constructed the Windrush have and sent it coursing might have had, the SS Windrush was not the Mayflower and those whom it brought to Britain were not pilgrim fathers and mothers. They were from the Caribbean but not of the Caribbean. They had had a life experience with Britain before boarding that ship; an experience defined by imperialism, colonialism and racism.

The Windrush made one single voyage from the Caribbean to London in June 1948 carrying 500 people. Between then and 1962 when the British government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act to restrict open entry to its colonial citizens who were suddenly 'coloured immigrants', some 300,000 more had arrived on other ships or by air. In 1961 alone, in order to beat the impending ban that the 1962 legislation would impose, 125,000 arrived from the Caribbean. Their arrival sent shockwaves through the nation and huge swathes of the population demanded that their government should 'keep Britain white'.

How, then, does the Windrush come to define the Caribbean population and its descendants in Britain for all time?

No doubt, the Windrush Commemoration Committee focuses on those who came from the Caribbean between the arrival of the S.S. Windrush in 1948 and 1971, rather than 1987 let's say, because the Immigration Act 1971 effectively completed the process racializing immigration, which the government had started in 1962 and built upon in 1968. After 1971, there was no

automatic 'right of abode' and those seeking permanent residence had to demonstrate patrilial links to Britain, or that they had been legally resident here for 5 years or more.

We complain about the falsification and erasure of our history by Eurocentric historians with a colonial mindset. But that entire Windrush narrative distorts the history of Caribbean engagement with Britain and of Britain's relentless efforts to keep us out and prove to the 'keep Britain white' electorate that we were not wanted.

If that monument celebrates the lives, contribution and legacy of those who came to the UK from the Caribbean (1948-1971), it is surely also a monument to the brutality of the British state in deporting undocumented Windrush folk who have lived all their lives in this country but were negligent in hanging on to their iconic blue British colonial passport and not regularising their British nationality; to Caribbean people who have so enriched life in Britain and contributed to its development into a modern multi-ethnic state. But that state is one which has an industrial prison complex where descendants of the Windrush generation are more populous than any other section of the population; where we are over-represented in most manifestations of social malaise and grossly under-represented in positions of influence, decision making and the exercise of social and economic power, in government as in pretty much every societal institution. Needless to say, it would be utterly perverse and mindless for anyone to point to Badenoch, Kwarteng, Javid, and heaven forfend, Patel to challenge this characterisation of the British state.

Despite all of that, however, shamelessly and totally without compunction, the British government declared that it had no intention of engaging with the UN Declaration on the Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and putting in place a programme of policies and actions consonant with the theme of Recognition, Justice and Development. In proclaiming the Decade, the UN cited:

'the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society'.

Instead, the Johnson government engaged Dr Tony Sewell to examine evidence of racial disparities and come up with a report which effectively said that irrespective of research evidence, government's own statistics and communities' perennial struggles for equal rights and justice, all was well in 'ole Blighty' and the government should hold firm and ignore the naysayers.

In my book and while acknowledging Basil Watson's remarkable work, this is a monument to unforgivable political illiteracy and an entrenched colonial mindset. What's more, it is a monument to state racism, hypocrisy and hubris.

The danger is that it will have future generations of Britons, Black & White, and visitors from across the globe believing in the Windrush hype, with no awareness that the monument represents a complete falsification of the historical and contemporaneous relationship between the Caribbean community and Britain.

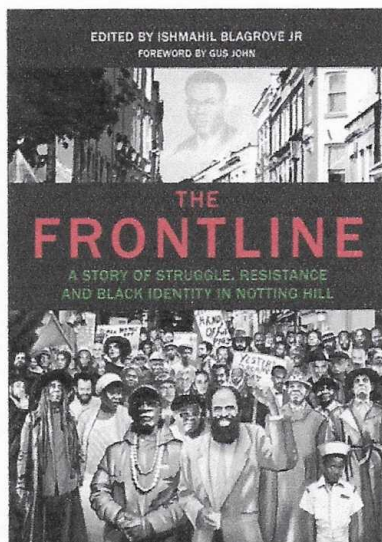
This Windrush narrative is fixed in aspic and creates no bridge between the struggles against racism and for equal rights and justice we have had to wage in this society over the last century and the efforts of those for whom we have made Britain home to build a future where combating systemic racism does not remain their day-to-day reality.

Her Imperial Majesty and no doubt Charles and William on her behalf will continue adorning the so-called Windrush generation and their descendants with British Empire gongs, while systemic racism becomes more and more embedded in Britain, as if it has nothing whatsoever to do with them.

For the avoidance of doubt, I will not be joining you at Waterloo on 22 June.

Yours in Hope!

Professor Gus John



THE FRONTLINE

A Story of Struggle, Resistance and Black Identity in Notting Hill

Edited by Ishmahil Blagrove JR

Foreword by Gus John

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RIVETING NEW BOOK REVEALS THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN NOTTING HILL

LONDON, UK (31 May 2022). *The Frontline - A Story of Struggle, Resistance and Black Identity in Notting Hill*, is the much anticipated new book by author and documentary filmmaker Ishmahil Blagrove Jr.

Spanning four generations, *The Frontline* chronicles the rise and fall of the All Saints Road Frontline, which, at its height, was the heart and nerve centre of the close-knit Ladbroke Grove community and one of the most important Black communities to have emerged in Britain. Speaking within these pages are witnesses from the 1930s onwards, many of whom are intellectuals, artists, musicians, residents, and ordinary everyday people from the rank and file. In trusting Blagrove, himself a respected activist, they give first-hand testimonies that weave together the history of a community and episodes in the journey of African and Caribbean people in Britain.

Over the years, the gradual gentrification of the area means that the Notting Hill described in this book is today unrecognisable. Many of the small once-thriving Black businesses – including bookshops, shebeens, restaurants, and youth clubs central to understanding this history – no longer exist, driven out by ever-increasing rents, and the gradual displacement of the African and Caribbean community in particular.

This volume is the culmination of some three decades of interviews, plus seven years of research, amounting to more than 240 hours of recordings, cementing the previously untold and fragmented narratives of a community whose story until now has been relatively untold.

Against the backdrop of the Notting Hill Carnival and the bohemian and ultra-hip history of the streets of West London, here are tales of police repression, crime, gentrification and community activism and empowerment. It is hard not to fall deeply in love with the story of 'The Frontline' and its exquisite portrayal of one of the most important Black communities to have emerged in post-war Britain.

Already touted as a masterpiece, *The Frontline* is one of the most intriguing books ever written about the Black British experience!

The book will be launched at The Tabernacle, Powis Square, London, W11 2AY, on Friday 24 June 2022, 6.30pm - 9.00 pm (wine and rum reception - 7.00pm)